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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **INS and Mexico Intensify Border Safety Campaign**

Efforts include joint rescue training and a new public service announcement

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Border Patrol Chief Gustavo De La Viña and Jose Angel Pescador Osuna, Under Secretary for Population and Immigration Services in Mexico, today announced two new measures to reduce injuries and prevent fatalities along the shared border.

The new measures include binational search-and-rescue training and a jointly produced Public Service Announcement (PSA) aimed at potential migrants. The binational training will help ensure that both U.S. and Mexican agents on the border have appropriate safety training, and that they share valuable rescue techniques.

San Diego Sector Border Search Trauma and Rescue Team members (BORSTAR) are training 21 Mexican Grupo Beta officers. The joint training on exposure survival and search-and-rescue techniques is designed to help ensure that Mexican officers on the border receive appropriate rescue training. The training includes extensive physical and medical training and will culminate today in a rescue exercise, where officers will demonstrate techniques learned during the past two weeks.

“We want migrants to know that Border Patrol agents and their law enforcement counterparts in Mexico can save their lives. That’s why the binational rescue training is critical. If they are in trouble, they should look for an agent. Protecting our borders includes the obligation to protect lives,” said De La Viña. Last year Border Patrol agents rescued more than 2,400 migrants from life-threatening situations.

U.S. Border Patrol agents participate in joint training exercises with their Mexican counterparts in order to keep agents on both side of the border prepared and trained in public safety measures.

“Many of the migrants come from Central American countries and have no idea about the hazards of the border area. We’re there to protect them.” said Pescador Osuna, “With the benefit of joint rescue training, agents on both sides of the border will be better able to help migrants.”

The joint PSA produced by the U.S. Border Patrol, in conjunction with the Federal Preventive Police (PFP) and Grupo Beta, will be released today as well. The PSA, which will air in Mexico, Central America and the Southwest United States, lets migrants know that U.S. and Mexican agents are there to help them if they get into life-threatening situations.

“Our goal is to further strengthen the border-wide safety program. Training and Public Service Announcements are positive steps toward heightening awareness and enhancing cooperation across the border,” said Chief De La Viña.

The Border Safety Initiative, developed two and a half years ago in close cooperation with Mexican officials, is designed to educate migrants about the risks and dangers of crossing the border illegally and to assist those who do not heed the warnings. The Initiative draws on longstanding public safety measures practiced locally by the Border Patrol along the Southwest border. It has three elements: prevention, search and rescue and identification.

This initiative builds on actions the Border Patrol has already taken to increase the safety of the border region. As part of the Border Safety Initiative, the Border Patrol has:

- Incorporated the Border Safety Initiative into the operational plan of each station on the Southwest border.
- Developed and implemented a comprehensive methodology for tracking migrant deaths and rescues.
- Mapped dangerous crossing points and developed reports outlining where deaths and injuries occur.
- Deployed technology and personnel to cover especially hazardous areas.
- Worked with Mexican officials to post warning signs at major transportation areas and especially dangerous crossing points.
- Expanded the coordination of public information efforts with U.S. and Mexican media outlets to warn would-be crossers about dangerous crossing points.
- Equipped all vehicles with water containers as well as rescue equipment including hot and cold weather rescue packs.
- Established toll-free numbers for anyone to call the INS when they see a migrant in danger and in need of rescue.

- Worked with Mexican Consuls, local medical examiners and INS officials to establish border-wide procedures to identify the deceased.

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